

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of enabling a plurality of users to each individually operate a user computer system connected to a communication link to remotely retrieve discrete data units from one of a plurality of electronic publications stored on a central computer system via a communication link connected therebetween, said method comprising the steps of:

(a.) establishing a library database comprised of a plurality of electronic publications in a central computer, each of said electronic publications comprised of a plurality of discrete data units generally containing subject matter not found in the others of said electronic publications;

(b.) establishing a user profile database in said central computer for storing a plurality of individual user profiles, each individual user profile ~~comprising~~ associated with a list of at least one target electronic publication selected from said plurality of electronic publications and through which the user is provided with limited selective access to the list of the electronic publications within said library database;

(c.) receiving a request for one or more desired data units from one of said target electronic publications;

(d.) determining the validity of the user's request for data units from said electronic publication by comparing the request with information stored in the corresponding individual user profile including said target electronic publication profile database and, if there is a match, the request is a valid request;

(e.) transmitting said desired data units upon determining the validity of the user's request, from said central computer system to a user computer system operated by said user via a communication link connected therebetween; and

(f.) displaying said desired data units on a display device of said user computer system for viewing by said user, wherein said displaying step is performed in response to said transmitting of said desired data units from said central computer system to said user computer system.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said desired data units to said user computer system over the Internet.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said desired data units to said user computer system over a radiotelegraphic system.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said desired data units to said user computer system over a cable system.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting said desired data units to said user computer system over a satellite-based communication system.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said desired data units comprise text works.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said desired data units comprise graphical works.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said request information comprises user identification input and a password input for enabling user access to the central computer.

Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of:  
establishing a registration process for permitting users who are not registered access to said library database.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 9, wherein said establishing a registration process comprises:

receiving personal and billing information from said user;  
establishing a newly created individual user profile;  
assigning an individual user profile, a user identification and an associated password to said user; and  
copying said personal and billing information and assigned information to said individual user profile.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 10, comprising the step of providing a software facility for the handling of billing of access to said plurality of said electronic publications stored on said library database.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- receiving selection information of electronic publications from said user;
- evaluating said selection information with information contained in an associated user profile;
- approving said selection information of said electronic publications;
- writing said selection information in said associated user profile for permitting future access to said selected electronic publications; and
- performing review selection processing for permitting the user to review selection information.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 12, wherein said performing review selection processing comprises:

- displaying said selection information of said electronic publications on said display device of the user computer system;
- receiving modification input from the user to modify said selection information, wherein said modification input operates to modify the selection of one or more electronic publications;

modifying said selection information upon evaluation and approval of said modified selection information in response to receiving said modification input; and

displaying said selection information after said modifying.

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

permitting participating electronic publication providers who have satisfied security access criteria to add, modify, or delete electronic publications in said library database.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 1, prior to the transmitting step, further comprising the step of:

time stamping electronically the data units by said central computer for limiting residence time of the data units in the user computer system.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the transmitting step further comprises:

limiting the quantity of transmitted data units to a fixed amount for each request.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving request from the user comprises receiving request from the user which operates to select a search engine for searching for one or more electronic publications.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
enabling the user to search for available electronic publications on said library database by a search parameter selected from a group consisting of title, author, ISDN, publisher, subject matter, and genre.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:  
establishing a school information database in said central computer for storing a plurality of individual school profiles by which each student user can access a corresponding plurality of preassigned electronic publications stored in said library database.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of:  
establishing a student registration process for permitting the student user to access to said corresponding plurality of preassigned electronic publications.

Claim 21 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein said establishing a student registration process comprises the steps of:

receiving school and student information of said student user;

searching said school profile database and corresponding school profile for information relating to said student user;

establishing a newly created individual user profile;

assigning a user identification, a password, and a listing of preassigned electronic publications for access by said student user; and

copying said assignment information to the newly created individual user profile for said student user.

Claim 22 (original): The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of:

receiving modification input from the student user to modify the listing of preassigned electronic publications for access by said student user; and

modifying the listing of preassigned electronic publications upon authorization and approval by school authorities.

Claim 23 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said displaying step is performed on a dedicated reader enhancement software installed in said user computer system for providing high font resolution and rendering capabilities.